Why You Get Tired So Fast (And How to Fix It Instantly)

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[00:00:00] Here's something that makes no sense. The slower you train, the faster you race. Sounds like complete bullshit, right? I thought so too. For my first 15 years of running, I pushed every single run, constantly trying to beat yesterday's pace, never slowing down, and ended up injured and burned out. Then I read something in an endurance training book that completely flipped everything.

[00:00:20] Thought I knew. It's one simple trick that elite runners use for months before they touch race pace work. And once I started doing it, my easy pace dropped from walking hills to running a sub three hour marathon in my zone two heart rate. In this episode, you're gonna find out why you blow up in races in long runs and what to do about it.

[00:00:39] The lead pro secret. 80% easy, 20% hard, and what that all means, the whole 80 20 rule, how to stay healthy and avoid injury and a free training plan so you can use this ASAP in your own training and life, et cetera. I'm Daren D Lake Run coach, and someone who spent the last 15 years figuring out how to run as long and as far as possible.

[00:01:00] With ease. I tested as many base training methods as I could, so base training is how you actually run further and farther, and it helped me complete a 10 hour Ironman mostly using my zone two heart rate. My goal is to show more than 20,000 other self-coach runners how running slow can help you run longer and faster too.

[00:01:19] But before I do that, what is base training? So. This is the whole problem. Most runners try to build speed before they build endurance. It's like putting a turbocharger on a lawnmower engine. It looks cool, but that don't work. Simple definition base training equals building your aerobic engine. And your chassis, which is your body, musculoskeletal system, tendons, ligaments, soft tissue, et cetera.

[00:01:43] That's it. That's all base training is. I'll talk about the aerobic system and a bit of building up your body in a very short section, but here's a better way to think about it. It's like building your financial credit before buying a house. You need solid credit history before anyone will trust you with the mortgage base training is your running credit score.

[00:02:01] You can't skip it and expect to get approved for the big stuff like a marathon best time or running a fast half marathon or even a fast 5K without blowing up in the middle. You need the base. I didn't get this at all when I first started running back when I was competing in middle distance in college.

[00:02:16] So that's like the 800 meter and a bit of the 400 meter. Two and one laps around the track. I watched the Prefontaine movie Without Limits The good one, not with Jared Lettel, the other one. And I became obsessed with one question. How does someone run 10 miles, 16 kilometers at five minutes per mile pace?

[00:02:33] That's 3 43 minutes per kilometer for metric folks. How do you do that without falling apart? 'cause I just started distance running and I was like, this is craziness. I thought the answer was obvious. Run fast all the time. Train at race pace. Suffer more obviously. That's what I did. Every single run became a test, a time trial, pretty much a race.

[00:02:51] I checked my watch constantly trying to beat yesterday's pace, pushing harder, going faster. And guess what happened? Within four weeks, I had plantar fasciitis my first time and it stuck around for months. I didn't even know how to get rid of it. I just stopped running. I couldn't run it all. Completely sideline.

[00:03:06] I got into cycling and triathlon after that, but that injury taught me something. I wish someone had told me upfront. Prefontaine didn't run 10 miles at

five minute pace in the beginning all the time because he trained at five minute per mile pace. He ran that fast because he spent months sometimes entire seasons running way slower.

[00:03:25] Like embarrassingly slower. We're talking seven minute miles, eight minute miles, that's four 30 per kilometer, or 5, 5 15 per kilometer, or even slower on recovery days. He was building the base and creating the foundation that wouldn't let him suffer at five minute per mile pace or 3 43 or three 30 minutes per kilometer.

[00:03:44] Sorry, I have to bounce between kilometers for the metric people and miles, because I've had both people complain where they go, I don't understand that you need to speak in married. I don't understand it. You need to speak in metric. So I'll just do it all the time, whenever I have paces and numbers. Once I finally did that base stuff.

[00:03:58] So 14 weeks of slow, boring. Ego crushing, easy running something dope happened. My easy pace, it naturally dropped. What used to feel hard, started feeling comfortable, and eventually I ran a sub three hour marathon without ever trying to run fast in training. I did try, but it was much, much easier. I wasn't trying harder, I was trying less, and that all made the difference.

[00:04:20] Let's do a quick run science nerd break and talk energy systems for. 45 seconds because this actually matters to fully understand base training, why it works, et cetera. So your body has two main fuel systems, aerobic with oxygen and anaerobic without oxygen. There is some stuff in the middle, but we won't talk about this.

[00:04:37] Keeping it very basic. Think of aerobic like a diesel engine. Super efficient, steady, can run forever. You know, you put in a little bit and you get a whole lot. Anaerobic is like nitrous oxide for you. Car freaks, explosive, powerful, burns out fast. Really quick. When you run easy, you're building mitochondria, the power plants in your cells.

[00:04:58] You're growing new capillaries, tiny blood vessels that deliver oxygen, so you get more of those to deliver more oxygen to your muscles, et cetera, and teaching your body to burn fat instead of sugar. More efficiently. That's the stuff that lets you run far without dying, and I get it. You want to start this now?

[00:05:15] You don't want to guess at paces and wondering if you're doing it right. Don't worry. I got you. I built a complete 30 day starter base training plan. It's got exact paces, workout strength exercises, plyo strides, form drills. Everything you

need to nail this phase without overthinking it. I'll go over that stuff in literally the next section.

[00:05:32] Grab it at the QR code up here, or hit up the link in the description below. If you're watching on YouTube or if you're listening to this as a podcast while you're running or in the gym, check out the show notes to get that link. In research, it backs this up. A 2007 study compared runners doing 80% easy training versus those doing 65% easy training.

[00:05:53] The 80% easy group improved their 10 K times way more, even though they did less hard work. So that that group that did 65% easy training, 35% actually. Hard interval training and elite runners, they all do this, or at least most of them do. Kipchoge, Efan, Hassan, Jakob, Inga, Brisson, uh, whoever you name, whatever person you look up to, they're probably doing this.

[00:06:15] They spend months, sometimes four to six months building base before they touch the serious speed work and the long volume, the miles and kilometers. If it's good enough for the best runners on the planet, it's probably good enough for us amateurs. So if easy running builds the engine, that makes you faster.

[00:06:31] What does that actually look like in the real world for you? The actual base training plan. So base training has three main parts, easy running, the long run, and training to build the chassis. So pillar one, easy running, 80% of your volume. Just go a bit deep on this. This is your bread and butter, the foundation, the thing that you'll spend most of your time doing.

[00:06:48] Get used to it. I actually love. Zone two training. I love it. Zone one and zone two training. Heart rate stay in zone two. You can do zone one, but it's quite hard for new runners to run in zone one. Usually walking in zone one. So highly suggest you learn to run very slow in zone one. That's conversational pace.

[00:07:05] If you can't talk in full sentences, you going too hard. Real world test. Can you hold a conversation? Can you say, Hey, did you see that new show on Netflix about the guy who does the thing? Without gasping for air, then you're good. Here's a number to remember. Quick guideline. 180 minus your age gives you a rough max heart rate for easy runs.

[00:07:23] AKA, your high zone two. So if you're 35 years old, that's about 145 beats per minute. Maximum ish. Is that perfect science? Nah, it's a starting point. Some people need to adjust up or down, but if you're new to this, it'll get you in the ballpark. Uh, your body is a gradient, so there's no on off switch. It's very rare that

one thing is gonna turn it on and then one like no, you can be very close to and still get a lot of the benefits and you're gonna feel like you're jogging in slow motion.

[00:07:49] That's the point. You don't want to be running too slow where you have bad form. That means that you probably need to start walking or do a combination of walk run, but. You're gonna be running quite slow and that's absolutely fine. This pace will feel very, very slow. Your ego, it's definitely gonna hate it and you might feel a bit silly, but what happens under the hood, you're building mitochondrial density again, growing capillaries, teaching your body to use fat as fuel.

[00:08:12] All the boring stuff that will make you fast. Pillar two, long run. Once a week, you're gonna go long. A long run is usually the longest run of the week. And depletes glycogen, not glycogen. As I've said before, glycogen, people hate me that I said glycogen. It's relative to however much you train in the week.

[00:08:30] It doesn't have to be crazy long. For some, I went deeper on how to do long run and all my different types of long runs, et cetera. Uh, you can get that at the video below. Or the link in the description, but a quick TLDR. The long run builds aerobic capacity. Your ability to keep going when your brain is gently telling you to stop possibly screaming at you to stop, start at 60 to 90 minutes for your long run at about 10% per week is the goal.

[00:08:58] And this is important. Run at the same easy pace as your other runs. This is not a temple run. This isn't a race. This is just. More easy running long runs. Teach your body to manage fatigue, burn fat efficiently. It's all about burning fat more efficiently and stay mentally strong. When things get a bit tough and uncomfortable and awkward, they are the secret sauce.

[00:09:17] They're necessary. Alright? Easy running and long runs. That's the aerobic base, but most beginners, miss. The next part completely, which I will get into in a second. Alright, back into the last pillar of how to build aerobic base building the chassis and run economy, which is based around strength training, plyometric strides, and form drills.

[00:09:37] We wanna get this to about two times per week. So why does this matter? You need to prepare your muscles, tendons, ligaments, uh, soft tissue, connective tissue, et cetera, for the stress of running. That stuff takes two to four times longer to get fit and to be able to handle running a lot than your cardiovascular system.

[00:09:53] And your cardiovascular system is your heart and your lungs. That gets fit quite quickly. All the other stuff is where the injuries happen. So people get plantar

fasciitis. People have Achilles issues, shin splints, knee. All that stuff, you need to obviously build that chassis up. So this is where you can sneak in explosive work, explosive.

[00:10:14] I'll put some quotations around it without fatigue or injury that comes with full blown speed work. It's like preparing your body for it. This is the stealth pro move that amateurs, they ignore it. You're building power and speed while you're supposedly doing easy based training. So this is where. I like to actually have fun with base training.

[00:10:31] It allows me to like kind of go all out or close to it, but I don't get any of the risk and the issues with going all out. So I get to kind of touch it for a second and then come out. So here, I'll break it down. So, strength work first start at one times per week. Try to build up to two times per week.

[00:10:45] Squash lunges, single leg dead lifts. Calf raises core work, basic stuff, upper body, rows, pushups, bench, whatever you can do builds durability. Try to focus obviously on legs and stuff where if you have any injury related things, this isn't bodybuilding. You're not trying to get jacked. We're just trying to build it up, which doesn't take a lot.

[00:11:03] Alright, so I did a full episode on the best body weight exercises for beginner runners. Check out the card on the screen up here, or the link. In the episode description or show notes. Next thing is strides. I'm a big fan of these. Try to do them. You could do them, you know, two to three times per week.

[00:11:18] What always start at once per week, usually after easy runs. So strides are short control, bursts of speed. You're hitting about 90%, 80 to 90% max speed over the course of about 10 to 20 seconds. So it's like kind of, uh, 50, 60, 70, 80, 80% hold, and then down up to 50%. I'd say start at four. You can end at like eight after eight repeats, eight strides, uh, after about two, three months of doing them consistently.

[00:11:44] And again, 10 to 20 seconds. Add a bit faster than your 5K pace or effort or feel full recovery of about 40 seconds to a minute in between. And the purpose of all this, it keeps your legs sharp, keeps your neuromuscular coordination tight. Remind your body what it feels like to move fast without beating up your aerobic system.

[00:12:02] And it also helps you when you get tired, because when you get tired, a bit of run science here. Your slow twitch fiber muscles shut down and then your fast twitch to fiber muscles actually turn on. And if those aren't fit, you actually will go

deeper in a hole. But if they are, you get kind of a bit of a boost during, uh, long runs and races when you are about to burn out.

[00:12:23] I did a whole full episode breaking down strides, the. In the description or up here, the link up here, or the description below. And next is plyometrics. My favorite, I love plyometrics, and we could talk about form drills in a second, but these plyometrics are basically jumping, they're jumping drills.

[00:12:39] That's all it is. So difference between plyometrics and form drills. Form drills are actually running type drills where you're focusing on running dynamics and running mechanics. Ply masters are more jumping and being explosive. Going all out for a couple seconds. So box jumps, broad jumps, pogo, single leg hops, uh, drop down.

[00:12:58] So when you jump down and then jump up, uh, keep it at, I'd say anywhere from two to three sets when you start. And anywhere from like five to 10 reps maybe with. Pogo, you can do 10 to 15. So low volume, but high, high intensity. This is where you can go hard. If you have a couple weeks of base and you've done these a couple times, you can go like 95, a hundred percent, and again, it builds explosive power and it trains your nervous system to fire fast.

[00:13:24] Form drills. So this is something that a lot of people don't do and my favorites are pogo can be a form of form drills. So they're similar to plyometrics, bounders, high knees, butt kicks, if you understand how to do skipping any sort of skips a skips bips, C Skips. I did a whole episode on a skips and how to do that.

[00:13:43] If that confuses you, you can get that up there. Or. Below in the link in description. I do so many deep dives on so many different things with these form drills. I like to do them in your warmup and plyometric can also be in your warmup or you cool down plyometric about once or twice a week. Or you can microdose one one little exercise as a warmup.

[00:14:02] So do one four minute form drills. You can do probably two times a week, three times a week, and do them before all your warmups. I actually do two to three minutes of form drills. Pretty much every run, whether, you know, sometimes I do eight to 10 minutes depending, I might do a dedicated set of form drills and plyometrics.

[00:14:17] So, uh, if you wanna do a set one to two, about 20 to 30 minutes each of form drills, these drills will lock in good mechanics when you're fresh. And then when you're tired, you immediately subconsciously goes into it so your form doesn't

fall apart, you don't get all wobbly and whatnot. So why this all works, it's explosive work disguised as accessory work.

[00:14:36] So it actually. Feels like it's not actually doing anything. Um, it's like makeup, feels like makeup or you know, some sort of like random thing paint, but it actually is building up that chassis. Okay? So you know what to do, but nobody asks you this question until it's too late. What happens if you skip all this?

[00:14:52] Why you shouldn't skip base training? So let's be real for a second. Base training is boring. It can be for most people. It's not sexy. You're not posting this on Strava or Instagram. Stories about your zone one. Shuffle, run, walk zone two, blah, blah, blah. You know, you skip it because it's not like post worthy, it's not shareable worthy.

[00:15:10] You end up not doing it. You go, what's the point? Here's what happens. Your fitness plateaus fast. Without anaerobic base, you hit a ceiling. You can only push so hard for so long before your body it goes no tap out. But no base means no room to grow. Another thing that happens, you get injured stress fractures.

[00:15:27] Tendinopathies, uh, some people get tendonitis. It's, it's not really a thing. Tendonitis, tendinopathies it, band syndrome, runner's, knee, all the classic overuse injuries. Oh, forgot about shin splints. That's another one. Um, but this all happens from doing too much intensity on too little. Foundation, your bones, tendon, and ligaments.

[00:15:44] They need more time to adapt than your cardio system. I know I said that before. I'm gonna say it again 'cause it's something you need to understand as a new runner base trainer. It gives them all that time. Even intermediate and expert runners need to know this stuff because they get a lot of wacky injuries.

[00:15:59] Alright, another thing, you burn out mentally running hard all the time. It's exhausting. Not just physically, but mentally. You start dreading. Runs. When you're constantly killing yourself. You're like, I don't wanna do this. You lose the love for it. That's the whole point. But what if we flip it? What happens when you do it right?

[00:16:14] You run faster at lower effort. Your easy pace drops naturally. It takes some time, takes a couple months, takes eight to 12 weeks, but it will happen. What used to feel hard? Starts feeling comfortable. That's not magic. That's your aerobic system. Leveling up. You build durability, fewer injuries, faster recovery.

[00:16:30] You can handle more volume, more intensity. You could. Overall go faster, more everything. And then you start running faster times and then you complete

that cycle. You keep going over and over again. Train more and more base training, run faster times, et cetera. You then also create a foundation for speed later.

[00:16:44] And when you finally add speed work, it actually works. You're not just grinding yourself down, you're building on something solid. Alright, so I've just told you a whole bunch of stuff about bass. I want you to tell me. If base training is something that you do or not, so comment below. Or if you're on Spotify, you can comment on Spotify or you can email me TALK talk@onebetterrun.com.

[00:17:06] I love to hear it all. So, one last point we haven't talked about is duration. How long do you actually need to spend doing base? Quick breakdown. So for beginners, 12 to 16 weeks, if you just can't handle it at eight weeks, there will be adaptations. But get closer to that 10 to 12 weeks, you're gonna really see gains 16 weeks.

[00:17:21] That's for the masochist, the people that love suffering the stoics out there. I did that. I did 14 weeks, um, for my first, first, I haven't really touched that. Maybe one day I'll go that long. But if you're coming off a long break of not running or you're just starting out. Definitely get close to that eight to 10 week mark.

[00:17:36] 12 weeks again ideal. Your body needs time to build from scratch after your first base phase. You can top it up with shorter phases later. I'd say six to eight weeks would be nice since your body retains some of that fitness, if you keep running your lung, running is not a hobby. Running is something that should be more of like a lifestyle.

[00:17:54] It should be more of a habit. And once you make it a hobby, you're in, you're out, you're in, you're out. That's how you get injured. But if you're constantly running, you're constantly doing mostly easy running, you'll always maintain that base. Intermediate runners. So you've been running for one to two years, you.

[00:18:08] Eight to 12 weeks base is fine. Again, like I said, once you're jumping in, you don't have to do as much. Uh, but 12 weeks for some is probably best. You've got some kilometers and miles under your belt. Your body remembers it consistently. Advanced runners, as I said before, you can get away at four weeks, but I like to do one block of base training per year at six weeks, uh, just to make sure that my body has it and just kind of reset everything, get my body back to a baseline.

[00:18:34] Okay. I'm gonna keep it. 100. Gonna keep it a buck. You spent 12 to 16 weeks building your base. You've done the boring miles, your easy pace has dropped. You feel amazing. Are you ready for more? So what's next? You shift gears

Base training built the engine. Now you're gonna teach that engine how to run at speed.

[00:18:51] That means adding workouts, temple runs intervals, race pace efforts while still keeping most of your runs easy. The ratio flips during base, you were doing 80% easy, 10% moderate, 10% hard. Now you move to something like 60% easy, 70% easy. 20% moderate, 20% hard. You can kind of fluctuate that number. You're keeping the foundation, but you're adding more intensity on top of it.

[00:19:14] A typical week would look like this. Two easy runs, one tempo, a threshold workout, one interval of VO O2 max session, and one long run. This is someone that would run six days a week. They're quite advanced. And strength training form drills and plyometrics, sprinkled in sounds like a lot. It is. But you will run fast times if you can handle this and you do it slowly.

[00:19:32] This is where people, again, they get fast base, gives you the capacity. And look, I'm doing a full episode on how to transition from base work to speed work, what workouts to do, how to structure that, how to get up to four days a week if you've been even three, go to. Get up to five days a week if you've been doing four, et cetera.

[00:19:47] If you haven't already, hit a like and subscribe for that and I'll make sure that you get that in your feed in the future when it drops. Or you know what? Comment below if you want that advanced training plan. I love to find out from everyone. Alright, let's clear up some BS fake news about base training because if you do this wrong.

[00:20:03] It doesn't work as well. Two misconceptions, misconception. One base training is just slow, boring, running wrong base is about building a base, which means touching all the tools you'll use later. Again, strength, plyo strides, form drills. You're preparing your body for everything, not just easy kilometers and miles.

[00:20:19] Yes, most of your running is slow, but you're also doing explosive work. So that's the 80 20 polarized training is another way to think about it. The mobility work, the drills. It will make you a complete runner. And the second thing that runners get wrong, you can never touch zone three or zone four in base also wrong.

[00:20:37] 80 20 is a ratio. It's not a religion. If you accidentally drift into zone three on a long run, or your strides push you into zone four for 20 seconds. 30 seconds. That's fine. Your goal is, most of your training is easy. Not all of it. Like I said earlier, your body is a gradient. Uh, it's not an on off switch, so you can get it mostly right.

[00:20:57] Most of the time you will see big gains. Don't be like, oh, I did it wrong. You gotta stop your workout. Or, you know, immediately start walking. Just back it down once your heart rate gets a bit high. Uh, and again, you should be able to do some fast stuff during base training, which is nice. Um, sometimes I like to not.

[00:21:12] You fast stuff for a couple weeks, but again, that's a bit more advanced. If you haven't already, go grab my free base training plan. I built a complete 30 day starter plan with exact paces, workouts, plyo stride, strength exercises, and progressions. It's free. Grab it at the QR code on the screen or the link in the show notes.

[00:21:27] If you're listening. You'll also get signed up for my newsletter that lands in your inbox and takes five minutes or less to read. I go deep on foundational run topics like this, plus mental mindsets. Long runs and all that good stuff. Speaking of long runs, they're the secret sauce to every training plan and most runners get them wrong.

[00:21:42] Check out my episode on five long runs that will help you run smarter and race better. Link in the description or show notes below, or just the video should be right there for you to click on. Thanks for rocking pieces.